

# Exhibit 6

# Controversial Alaska gold mine opposed by Trump Jr. isn't dead, administration privately tells conservatives

By Abby Smith

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Officials from the Army Corps of Engineers are privately saying a large proposed gold and copper mine in Alaska isn't dead despite prominent Republicans, including Donald Trump Jr., urging the White House to block it.

Earlier this week, it **seemed like those Republican opponents had succeeded** in stalling the project. The Corps, in a **letter** made public Monday, asked developers of the proposed Pebble Mine to take significant additional measures before it can be permitted to compensate for harms the mine will have on wetlands and streams. Opponents called the requirements near-impossible.

A senior Corps official, however, recently sought to assuage conservative groups' fears that the project, which would be the largest gold and copper mine in North America, is off track.

Ryan Fisher, a principal deputy assistant secretary of the Army who oversees the Corps, said at a meeting of conservatives this week hosted by Americans for Tax Reform that the Corps's guiding policy is the letter to Pebble developers, not a press release from the Army that used stronger language against the project or other political noise in opposition to it, two people who attended the meeting told the *Washington Examiner*.

That **news release** said the Pebble project, "as currently proposed, cannot be permitted," adding it "would likely result in significant degradation of the environment" and "significant adverse effects on the aquatic system or the human environment."

Fisher also told the meeting that nothing had changed, according to those people's accounts. He said the Corps is still expecting a mitigation plan from Pebble developers, and if the proposed mine met the requirements, it could be permitted, those people said.

Americans for Tax Reform and other conservative groups such as the Competitive Enterprise Institute have long backed Pebble Mine. Those groups are raising alarm that if President Trump stops the project, it would contradict the work his administration has done to speed permitting and shorten environmental reviews.

"The only way Pebble gets denied is if the Trump administration decides to undermine the President's entire deregulatory agenda," Patrick Gleason, the tax group's vice president of state affairs, wrote in a *Forbes* [op-ed](#) Wednesday.

Fisher's private remarks track with what Pebble developers say they've heard from Army Corps officials.

Tom Collier, CEO of Pebble Limited Partnership, the mine's owner and a subsidiary of Canadian-based Northern Dynasty Minerals, said the company has known for several weeks that the Corps would be requiring mitigation to compensate for damages to wetlands, streams, and other waters.

The company has had 25 people out in the field in Alaska's Kaktuli River Watershed for a month, mapping the wetlands that will be included in its plan. That team will wrap up work on Sept. 1, and the company expects to have a plan to the Army Corps within two to three weeks, Collier told the *Washington Examiner*.

Collier dismissed the political pressure campaign from prominent conservatives opposed to the project, including Trump Jr. and Nick Ayers, the former chief of staff to Vice President Mike Pence.

"To my knowledge, there has been no such political interference in this process, and the process is moving forward, notwithstanding their personal objections," Collier said.

The dust-up comes after the Army Corps last month appeared to clear the way for the project's approval. The agency, in a [final environmental analysis](#) on July 24, concluded the mine would pose no serious risks.

The fight within the White House, however, may only be just beginning.

Ayers, in a [tweet](#) last week, touted a “broad and deep coalition that has come together” to stop the mine.

Tucker Carlson, who ran a [segment](#) against the mine on his Fox News show Aug. 14, [told](#) *E&E News* that an administration official called him to talk about the project after the segment aired, though he declined to speak with the official.

“I’m as pro-business as it comes,” Trump Jr. told the *Daily Caller* in an interview Wednesday. “That doesn’t mean there aren’t places that are just sacred.”

Trump Jr., who has fished in Alaska’s Bristol Bay waters, suggested the mine would harm the region’s commercial salmon fisheries.

“This is a migratory species that comes back to one place to breed,” Trump Jr. added. “You destroy that, you have one little slip-up, you destroy a species.”

Environmentalists have also said Pebble Mine would do irreparable damage to the Bristol Bay waters, one of the world’s most productive salmon ecosystems.

The mine and its associated transportation corridor would harm more than 3,800 acres of wetlands and more than 180 miles of streams that Pebble developers will have to compensate for, according to the Army Corps’s letter.

“Unproven technology, shoddy science, and broad public opposition led to today’s decision, and while Pebble is not dead, it’s safe to say the Pebble Limited Partnership is on life support,” said Tim Bristol, the director of SalmonState, an Alaska-based group that protects the state’s salmon population, in a statement on the Army Corps’s letter.

Many environmental groups are calling on the Environmental Protection Agency to block Pebble Mine, as the Obama administration was prepared to do before it left office. More than 200 businesses, including big brand names such as Patagonia and Whole Foods, echoed those calls in a letter to EPA officials Tuesday.

Collier acknowledged the Army Corps is demanding a “significant amount” of mitigation for the mining project, more than he has seen for other projects in Alaska. Nonetheless, he said he remains “absolutely 100% confident” the project can meet all the requirements.

“We’ve invested nearly a billion dollars in getting this project to where it is in the permitting process,” Collier said. “And if political influence, because of the tweet of somebody like Nick Ayers, can stop that, then no one is going to invest in America again.”